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Introduction To Language and Technology

29 September 2015

In choosing the topics for this paper, I wanted to choose things that really hit home in a very particular way. There are many social injustices in today’s society, but these three really stood out to me, and are very fresh on my mind for various reasons. The first of the three topics that I will be discussing, is the rape culture that we are faced with in this nation, and all over the world. My real draw to the topic is this, for most of my life I was on the side of the argument that said that living in a first world nation, meant that you would not be subjected to a rape culture. Even after I had gotten to know several people that had faced sexual assault in their lifetime, and for various reasons, which all point to a rape culture, I still felt that a rape culture didn’t exist in the first world. Well, after a particular female entered my life recently, after some bonding, she revealed to me what she had only told one other person at the time, that she had been assaulted, and kept it to herself, for once again, concepts clearly only present, in a rape culture. However the severity of this particular scenario, really did open my eyes, and spark a great deal of interest, and care into the issue. The next topic, being the creation of internet “fast lanes” as well as the corporate effect on the internet as a whole, was an obvious choice to me. Being a person in the technology sector, both in school and in the job field, I have been fully aware of the the things

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that huge companies have been up to regarding the internet, since nearly the very beginning. The very clear effect on the people of this nation, both on a private and commercial level are very clear, and very dangerous. An unregulated internet, is the same as an unregulated economy, bound to fail and severely cripple the growth of our nation in unforeseeable ways. The next, and final social issue that I’ll be discussing in this paper, is one that I feel most people would be able to relate to, being, privacy More specifically, the way in which the right to privacy is being violated due to spying and data mining, both by the public and private sector. This was also an easy issue for me to tackle, as well as something that I have felt personally violated by in the past. Feeling targeted, through no fault of your own, is an incredibly uncomfortable feeling. This is an issue that needs millions of voices, not just one, I chose this issue to raise awareness as well.

***Rape Culture, It’s Effect, and The Way In Which It’s Perpetuated***

There are many ways in which I feel that rape culture is perpetuated in this country, as well as all over the world. One of which is, that many people still don't seem to take rape seriously as a concept. When a rape occurs, most people are outraged, naturally, but what about the things that caused that rape? Why did the rapist do what they did? How did they feel that, carrying out that action was the correct choice, and at the time, an “okay” thing to do? There is a reason that people do the things that they do, and in many cases, I feel that society has rationalized rape to some people. One way in which society seems to normalize rape is in the context of the “rape joke”. One concept discussed in Lara Cox’s paper, “Standing Up against the Rape Joke: Irony and Its Vicissitudes” is that the use of distasteful rape jokes among, especially,

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but not limited to, stand up comedians is on the rise. Cox speaks about how in some scenarios, the rape joke can be used to intimidate, and to a certain extent, put a woman “in her place”. Not only are jokes like this belittling to women on a general level, it also seems to normalize the concept of rape in general. When you joke about something, on some level, you make is seem as though the action itself is somewhat okay, if people can laugh about it, then surely the action itself must not be that bad, right? The fact is that rape is no joking matter, and while it is the right of people to joke about whatever they see fit, they should also be aware of the social implications of the statements that they are making.

This leads well into the idea that the concepts portrayed by media have a huge impact on the way in which we view just about anything. The media has a very particular message to get across to it’s viewers. Thusly, when the media portray women as tropes, things to be won, and constantly sexualize them, they help promote the rape culture. The media often fails to instill a sense of strength in girls, the way it does in boys, at a young age. It is also commonly stated that in the 21st century, that women have reached absolute equality with men, but that simply isn’t true. The simple right of feeling safe is something that many women are deprived of, is that isn't a social injustice, then I don’t know what is. Women are led to believe that, the only women that are raped are those who are subjecting themselves to danger by being alone at night and such. Not only is this not true, but an absurd statement in and of itself. Why should women not be able to do anything that a man can do? Also, rape seems to be belittled as a concept by the media in many ways. As Alyn Pearson speaks about in her article from the *Off Our Backs* academic

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journal, “*Rape Culture: Media and Message*”, “The term “date rape” is often mocked...as a creation by sexually insecure women.”( Pearson, 13). The sheer concept that date rape is something that is mocked by people, and that it’s considered socially acceptable by some to do so, is proof in and of itself of the rape culture and the way in which it leads to social injustice. “To be a young woman today means to live with the rape culture in all its subtleties.”(Pearson, 14). This quote speaks volumes to me, and is my main argument, as well as the that of the article itself. You may be intelligent, educated, and self confident, but the people of the rape culture don’t care. They view women the way that they are told to view them, based off the message of the media, and they perpetuate all of what is wrong with the media itself.

***Fast Lanes, Net Neutrality, Big Business, and Why it Matters***

The debate on net neutrality, and whether or not there should be fast lanes on the internet has been raging for nearly two decades at this point. I suppose to talk about things like this I should introduce what the concepts are, so that the ideas can be easily grasped. A fast lane is defined as follows, “ a lane of a highway for use by traffic that is moving faster than the rest.”. This is essentially the same in regards to the internet, only the “traffic” is the data packets that are being transferred, and the fast lane is imaginary, made up by the Internet Service providers, as a way to charge businesses more money to transfer their data. Net Neutrality is the movement that people started in order to keep the internet a free and open space for all people. The effect that big business has had on the internet industry is absolutely huge. Look at it this way, the

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companies that already have a lot an abundance of money to spend look at the fee’s that the ISP’s want to be paid as nothing. If they are able to throw around their disposable income to gain an advantage, then of course they will be willing to so. Mega corporations want to stifle innovation, the less things change the larger their “lead” becomes. In what way does this affect the average person though? The implications are tremendous for even an average everyday person. From not being able to enjoy content that they pay for, to being completely disallowed from accessing public domains simply because their ISP is in a feud with a certain company.

All of these concepts are discussed in the sources that I chose for this issue. The first of which being “*Subsidizing Creativity through Network Design: Zero-Pricing and Net Neutrality*” by Robin S. Lee and Tim Wu. This text from *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* is more of just a reference on the specific practices of the ISP’s and the historical actions taken by both the ISP’s as well as government agencies. The second is a review of a court ruling from the *Harvard Law Review*, titled “ *HOW "CHEVRON" STEP ONE LIMITS PERMISSIBLE AGENCY INTERPRETATIONS: "BRAND X" AND THE FCC'S BROADBAND RECLASSIFICATION”.* This article speaks about the way in which the petroleum giant Chevron used its financial prowess to bully other companies and major government organizations such as the FCC (Federal Communications Commision) to get what they wanted regarding the reclassification of broadband for personal business gain. The third, and final source that I referenced was an article from the media outlet CNN titled “*Why you'll hate the Internet 'fast lane'”*, by Corynne McSherry. This article speaks about the reasons that the average person would be starkly against the fast lane, and why that is so.

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***The Natural Right To Privacy, and How We’re Being Deprived Of It***

To even start to think about the way in which we are being denied a right, I first decided to reference the place from which rights arise from in this country. The Constitution, and the First 10 Amendments to the Constitution; The Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights states this, “ The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.”. This is what guarantees us our right to privacy in this nation, unless it is explicitly obvious that we are doing something wrong. Whether or not these concepts can be applied to the private sector is a separate matter entirely. However, it is apparent though, that the right to privacy from the government is protected by the fourth amendment. This brings me to the main point here, which is that, the United States government is very obviously, and at this point admittedly, peaking in at our private data, without any kind of warrant. This is an obvious breach of our rights and a very clear social justice issue. In his journal “INTERNET PRIVACY AND THE PUBLIC-PRIVATE DISTINCTION”, Frederick Schauer speaks about how there is a clear distinction between that of public and private data, and how that line should not be taken lightly. He then goes on to speak about the way in which privacy is being reduced due to the advent of the internet, and how one should be careful as to what they make public on the internet and what remains private. However, I feel that this line is blurred due to the government's highly invasive, and arguably, breach of constitutional rights.

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In recent years there have been several direct threats to the privacy of people in America, in the form of government legislation. One of which is SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act), one of the most highly disputed, and luckily defeated bills of recent years. As well as PIA (Protect IP Act), both of which aimed to reduce levels of net neutrality, and to make it easier, and legal to do even more data mining on the American people. All of which is discussed in Prifysgol Aberystwyth University’s “*Privacy in human Rights and Social Justice Context”*. The serious threat posed to the American public by the government using software backdoors, and carefully designed malware to view the personal information of all people is clear. When the government is the organization carrying out actions that go against it’s own constitution, the social rights violations are obvious.

Of all of the topics that I spoke about in this paper, I feel that the issue that I should focus on going forward is the rape culture and its effect on society, as well as society's effect on it. One positive aspect of me choosing this topic is that I have much to say about it and that I have many opinions regarding it. Another is that I feel a real emotional connection to the topic, as opposed to a simple logical connection to the other two. The negative aspect is, that I have much more prior knowledge on this topic relative to the other two. All in all, I feel the social injustice is far greater in the rape culture topic, and is something I would rather address more, moving forward.

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